

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): A load support and transfer platform for ~~use in moving objects off of~~ installation on a mobile, rectangular bed having an end, the load support and transfer platform comprising:

first, second and third segments disposed one adjacent to the next ~~end to end~~ in alignment with ~~an~~ the end of the rectangular bed, the first and second segments being connected to one another by a first articulating hinge articulated and the second and third segments being connected to one another by a second articulating hinge articulated;

an extension mechanism for moving the first, second and third segments as a unit partially off the rectangular bed by way of the end;

each of the first, second and third segments having an independently actuable conveyor forming an upper surface of its respective segment and operable to allow an object supported by one of the segments to be transferred to ~~another~~ an adjacent segment or off ~~one end of~~ the load support and transfer platform from the first segment; and

a positioning mechanism for rotating the first segment relative to the second segment on the first articulating hinge and for further rotating the second segment relative to the third segment on the second articulating hinge ~~vertically repositioning the first segment~~.

2. (Currently amended): The load support and transfer platform as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

a truck trailer providing the mobile, rectangular bed and having an open able end.

3. (Currently Amended): The load support and transfer platform as set forth in claim 2, further comprising:

a controller for extending and retracting the first, second and third segments ~~as a unit~~ and for operating the conveyors to move a last in object to the first segment for deposition of the last in object on an external surface, the controller being responsive to inputs for moving all of a plurality of objects supported on the load support and transfer platform toward the first segment and cutting movement of the conveyor for the third ~~member~~ segment to separate the last in object from the remaining objects while continuing to move the last in object toward the first segment.

4. (Currently Amended): The load support and transfer platform as set forth in claim 3, further comprising:

the first segment being a ~~terminal member~~ located closest to an the open able end of the trailer when the load support and transfer platform is fully retracted;

the second segment being an intermediate ~~member articulated between~~ to the first and third segments ~~members~~; and

the third segment being located farthest from the open able end of the trailer when the load support and transfer platform is fully retracted ~~a primary support member.~~

5. (Currently Amended): The load support and transfer platform as set forth in claim 4, further comprising:

the controller providing for retracting the first, second and third segments into the trailer while the conveyor for the first segment continues to move the last in object off the first segment at zero velocity relative to the external surface ground.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended): Apparatus comprising:

a trailer;

a main conveyor section providing a support surface for cargo;

a mid conveyor section abutting the main conveyor section to allow the cargo to be moved between the main conveyor section and the mid conveyor section ~~along an edge of each;~~

an end conveyor section abutting the mid conveyor section to allow the cargo to be moved between the end conveyor section and the mid conveyor

~~section along an edge of the mid conveyor section opposite the edge
abutting the main conveyor section;~~

a track installed on the trailer;

the main, mid and end conveyor sections being supported on the track for
horizontal movement on and off the trailer;

the mid conveyor section and main conveyor section being articulated allowing
the mid conveyor section to rotate ~~through~~ up to about ninety degrees
~~downwardly from the main conveyor section when not supported by the
track or a surface;~~

the end conveyor section and mid conveyor section being articulated allowing the
end conveyor section to rotate up to ~~through~~ about ninety degrees to
remain ~~horizontal~~ parallel to the main section while the mid conveyor
section is rotated on the main conveyor section; and

~~and each of the main, mid and end conveyor sections having a conveyor.~~

8. (Currently Amended): Apparatus as claimed in claim 7, further comprising:

a trailer suspension control system allowing ~~the~~ trailer height ~~of the truck~~ to be
adjusted.

9. (Currently Amended): Apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:

a controller for extending the main, mid and end conveyor sections from the trailer as a unit; and

the controller further providing, responsive to operator inputs, for adjusting the trailer height ~~of the truck~~ and ~~the articulation~~ rotation of the mid and end conveyor sections to place the end conveyor section on a target surface for unloading an object from the trailer.

10. (Currently Amended): Apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

the controller providing for selecting from independent and coordinated movement of the ~~conveyors on the~~ main, mid and end conveyor sections for repositioning, modifying spacing between and off loading objects.

11. (Currently Amended): A trailer onboard handling system for discrete units of freight comprises:

a segmented, translatable platform, movable as a unit;

a main segment of the translatable platform for supporting the discrete units during shipping;

a mid segment of the translatable platform attached for rotation on an axis provided by a first horizontal joint to the main segment;

an end segment of the translatable platform attached for rotation to the mid segment on a second horizontal joint parallel to the first horizontal joint;

a conveyor forming ~~the~~ a principal upper surface of each of the segments;

the conveyors being aligned from segment to segment to allow cooperative movement, respacing and off loading of the discrete units on and between the segments and off of the end segment; and

a platform translation system for extending and retracting the translatable platform from an open end ~~or side~~ of the trailer.

12. (Original): A trailer onboard handling system as claimed in claim 11, further comprising:

a rotation system for the mid and end segments allowing the end segment to be lowered to and placed flat on an external target surface.

13. (Original): A trailer onboard handling system as claimed in claim 12, further comprising:

a trailer suspension system allowing the trailer to be raised and lowered.